



# Belmont Health Department

*The mission of the Belmont Health Department is to provide a safe and healthy environment for the residents and visitors to Belmont.*

This is the 10th year that the Belmont Health Department has compiled an update that focuses on emergency planning for Belmont residents. These updates serve as a reminder to the community to eliminate rodents, avoid ticks and mosquitoes, and make personal and family plans for water, food, shelter and communications in the event of an emergency.

## Avoid Mosquitoes This Spring and Summer



New England has seen significant snowfall this winter. This means that the mosquito breeding environment will be primed for a large number of mosquitoes later this year.

Mosquitoes are not just a nuisance, they also carry disease to humans which makes it exceedingly important to try to avoid mosquitoes and practice safeguards against mosquito bites. The risk of becoming infected with mosquito-borne disease is highest from late July through September, although any periods of heavy rain will contribute to a large population of mosquitoes.

Belmont is part of the East Middlesex Mosquito Control Project, and as in recent years, workers from that project will treat Belmont's catch basins with mosquito growth inhibitors to reduce one of the biggest sources of mosquitoes in this community.

Residents **should** protect themselves from mosquitoes:

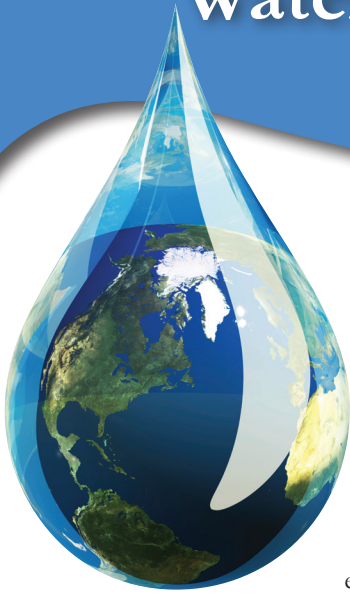
- Avoid outdoor activities between dusk and dawn, if possible, as this is the time of greatest mosquito activity.
- If you must be outside during that time, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants. If you choose to apply a chemical based repellent containing DEET, follow the manufacturer's directions carefully. Parents should never use DEET on infants; use a 10% or less DEET concentration on children and 30 to 35% or less on adults.
- Make sure as much skin as possible is covered when children are outdoors and cover baby carriages with netting.
- Fix all holes in screens and make sure doors and screens fit tightly.

**To reduce the mosquito population around your home and neighborhood, eliminate all standing water that is available for mosquito breeding and follow these simple guidelines:**

- Dispose of, or regularly empty, any metal cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots and other water holding containers.
- Pay special attention to discarded tires that may have collected on your property. Tires are a common place for mosquitoes to breed. For that reason, it is a violation of the Nuisance Regulations to leave tires stored outdoors.
- Clean clogged roof gutters; remove leaves and debris that would prevent good drainage. This may be the single biggest source of mosquitoes in any neighborhood.
- Turn over plastic wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Swimming pools should be kept properly filtered and chlorinated. They should never be allowed to remain stagnant.

Use landscaping to eliminate areas of standing water on your property. Reducing insect harborage is one of the goals of the Health Department's nuisance regulations which suggest that residents remove piles of rubbish, debris, yard waste, etc. from their yards.

# Water Water Everywhere..... ....and Not a Drop to Drink.



*Liz Allison, a member of the Belmont CERT (Citizens' Emergency Response Team) has provided the following advice on how to maintain a safe water supply.*

A disruption of vital services, including water supply, can occur at any time. Unfortunately, an advisory to "boil before drinking" may not be the best advice when electricity is also out. Although there may be other ways to boil water, including using your gas grill, this may not be the safest or easiest solution, especially in adverse weather conditions.

Here are three approaches to having enough pure water on hand for your family.

1) **"The Red Cross approach"** - It is recommended to keep a three day supply of a gallon of water per day on hand for each family member and pet. Rather than keeping small bottles; i.e.: a case of one

liter bottles, which turns out to be only 6 gallons, it is better to store three big five-gallon jugs...available at Star Market, Belmont Springs and elsewhere. They can be stored on a rack which takes up about a square foot of space. Be sure you have at least one family member who can lift and pour the water into pitchers for smaller family members!

2) **The minimalist, live lightly on the earth approach.** If you have a rain barrel (or water is still running, just not safe to drink), purification tablets will work, and the taste has improved over the years. Three packages will purify 18 gallons of water. It is a two-step process: the first boil for purification, the second to improve the taste.

3) **The serious quasi-survivalist approach.** If you want to be sure to have ample water regardless of the water source (ground water, stream, pond, rainwater, etc.) under any conditions, the Big Berkey® is one answer. It will produce up to 2 ½ gallons of pure water per hour. It is gravity fed (no electricity required) and lasts approximately 2000 hours. Although the cost averages around \$250, it can supply an entire household unlike a porta filter. This product is available through Amazon, Lehman's Non-Electric Catalogue and elsewhere.

## Help Eliminate Rodents In Your Community

The Belmont Health Department has received a dramatic increase in the number of complaints and sightings of rats from Belmont residents. All of the rat harborage areas that have been confirmed by Health Department staff have been on private property. Additionally, public property; i.e.: parks, school yards, and sewers are monitored by DPW and Health Department staff.

**We need your help! Please check your property for any rodent activity and/or rodent harborage areas and take corrective actions!** It is your responsibility to maintain your property to avoid a rat problem and to eliminate any infestation!

### Steps you can take on your property to assist us:

1. Use covered trash barrels made of metal or heavy plastic instead of trash bags. Do not put out your trash out earlier than the night before your scheduled pick-up.
2. Maintain your property in a sanitary manner to reduce the potential for rodents. Keep grills clean and store woodpiles neatly with at least a foot of clearance from the ground.
3. Rodent-proof all structures and garages using durable materials such as ¼" mesh, metal hardware or sheet metal. Eliminate all gaps greater than ¼".
4. Reduce or eliminate food, water and harborage that can be used by rodents. Do not leave pet food out at night and take down birdfeeders that rodents can access.
5. Remove dog and cat feces from your yard on a regular basis.
6. Thin out vegetation and keep your grass and shrubbery short.
7. If you live in rental housing, routinely inspect the property for evidence of rodents.  
If you see signs of rodents, tell your landlord.



If you discover a rat or other rodent problem on your property, contact a licensed pest control operator for assistance. Please contact the Health Department at 617-993-2720 if you have any questions or to obtain a list of pest control operators.

*This update is provided to you through a grant to the Health Department from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Region 4B Preparedness Program.*